

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BRUSSE 13144 051719Z
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TAGS: EEC, ETRD, BEXP
SUBJECT: EC DIRECTIVE ON STANDARDS OF FILL FOR BEER
CONTAINERS

REF: BRUSSELS 12336

1. THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE (ESC) PRESENTED ITS
OPINION JUNE 21 ON THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE PRE-
PACKAGED LIQUIDS DIRECTIVE (REFTEL). GIST OF THE COM-
MITTEE'S OPINION WAS THAT IT WELCOMED REDUCED NUMBER OF
SIZES IN THE DEFINITELY PERMITTED CATEGORY AND WOULD
PREFER TO REDUCE THE LENGTH OF TRANSITION PERIODS. TEXT
OF ESC OPINION FOLLOWS:

BEGIN TEXT: AT ITS 160TH PLENARY SESSION HELD ON 20 AND
21 JUNE 1978, THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE ADOPTED
BY 18 VOTES TO 12 AND 8 ABSTENTIONS ITS OPINION ON THE

PROPOSAL FOR A COUNCIL DIRECTIVE AMENDING DIRECTIVE
75/106/EEC ON THE APPROXIMATION OF THE LAWS OF THE
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PAGE 02 BRUSSE 13144 051719Z

MEMBER STATES RELATING TO THE MAKING-UP BY VOLUME OF
CERTAIN PREPACKAGED LIQUIDS.

THE COMMITTEE WELCOMES THE COMMISSION'S PROPOSAL AND IS
AS ANXIOUS AS THE COUNCIL AND THE COMMISSION TO SEE A
REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF "DEFINITELY ALLOWED" VOLUMES
LISTED IN ANNEX III TO DIRECTIVE NO. 75/106/EEC. A

REDUCTION IS PARTICULARLY WELCOMED WHERE VALUES ARE VERY CLOSE TO ONE ANOTHER.

THIS REDUCTION WILL AFFORD THE CONSUMER BETTER (IF NOT OPTIMUM) PROTECTION, THE REASON BEING THAT THE NEW RULES WILL MAKE FOR GREATER CLARITY IN THE CHOICE OF VOLUMES OF CERTAIN LIQUIDS AND MAY, IN ADDITION, LEAD TO COST SAVINGS. THE COMMITTEE ALSO ACCEPTS THE COMMISSION'S PROPOSAL FOR A TRANSITIONAL PERIOD FOR CERTAIN VOLUMES AND PRODUCTS, SINCE IT FEELS THIS WILL FACILITATE APPROXIMATION IN A NUMBER OF MEMBER STATES.

HOWEVER, IT BELIEVES THAT, ONCE THE DECISION AS TO THE "DEFINITELY ALLOWED" VOLUMES HAS BEEN MADE, THE CONSUMER WOULD BE BETTER PROTECTED IF THE OTHER VOLUMES WERE DROPPED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. THE COMMITTEE THEREFORE BELIEVES THAT THE PROPOSED TRANSITIONAL PERIODS SHOULD BE THE MAXIMUM ALLOWED AND THAT THEY SHOULD BE SHORTENED IF NECESSARY.

THE COMMITTEE STRESSES THAT THE STANDARDIZATION OF VOLUMES IS ESSENTIAL BUT WILL NOT BY ITSELF ENSURE THE TRANSPARENCY OF THE MARKETS, WHICH ALSO POSE THE QUESTION OF UNIT-PRICING, INFORMATIVE LABELLING, ETC.

THE COMMITTEE IS ALSO IN FAVOUR OF TOTAL APPROXIMATION AFTER THE PROPOSED TRANSITIONAL PERIOD WHICH MIGHT BE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 BRUSSE 13144 051719Z

SHORTENED.

THE COMMITTEE FINALLY BELIEVES THAT THE QUESTION OF VOLUMES SHOULD BE REVIEWED AT REGULAR INTERVALS WITH THE AIM OF GREATER RATIONALIZATION. END TEXT.

2. COMMENT: THE ESC HAS ONLY AN ADVISORY ROLE IN THE EC DECISION-MAKING PROCESS. NEVERTHELESS ITS POSITION WILL MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT TO SECURE CHANGES WHICH THE US IS SEEKING IN THE DIRECTIVE. HINTON

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